

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0756

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 756

NAIROBI FOR DEPUTY ASST SEC HARROP FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, DM

SUBJ: VISIT OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARROP

REF: STATE 129997

1. I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL ADJIN TODAY, MAY 23, TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HARROP VISIT. WHEN I HAD PREVIOUSLY SPOKEN TO FOREIGN MINISTER ALLADAYE MAY 19 DURING STATE DINNER FOR CONGO PRESIDENT YHOMBI OPANGO, ALLADAYE EXPRESSED GREAT PLEASURE THAT A SENIOR UNITED STATES OFFICIAL WOULD BE VISITING COTONOU FOR FIRST TIME IN THREE YEARS. HE SAID HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO MEET WITH HIM. HE WAS DUE TO LEAVE FOR PARIS ON MAY 21, HOWEVER, AND IT WAS NOT CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD BE BACK IN COTONOU BY MAY 26. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD ENSURE THAT THE MINISTER WHO ACTED FOR HIM WOULD RECEIVE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARROP.

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL ADJIN APOLOGIZED FOR NOT HAVING MADE CONTACT SOONER BUT EXPLAINED THAT GOVERNMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (GPRB) HAS BEEN TIED UP IN CONGO PRESIDENT'S VISIT AND IS NOW PREPARING FOR STATE VISIT BY GUINEAN PRESIDENT SEKOU TOURE MAY 25 AND 26. ADJIN SAID THAT
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HE WILL SCHEDULE A "WORKING SESSION" FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARROP AT 1100 A.M. FRIDAY, MAY 26, SO THAT HARROP CAN MEET WITH ACTING MINISTER (MOST LIKELY MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM ATCHADE), HIMSELF, DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS PAQUI, AND DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT NO. TWO (AMERICAN AFFAIRS) GNONLONFOUN. SINCE THE TOURE VISIT WILL ENTAIL STRICT SECURITY MEASURES AT FRONTIER AND ALONG ACCESS ROADS TO COTONOU,

ATCHADE REQUESTED THAT SECRETARY HARROP BE AT NIGERIAN/BENINESE FRONTIER AT 9:00 AM FRIDAY, MAY 26, SO THAT HIS ENTRY CAN BE FACILITATED. ADJIN ADDED THAT BENINESE GOVERNMENT WAS VERY PLEASED AT PROSPECT OF HARROP VISIT AND LOOKED FORWARD TO USEFUL DISCUSSIONS.

3. IT IS UNUSUAL FOR GPRB TO ACT SO QUICKLY ON A REQUEST, ESPECIALLY AT A TIME WHEN EVERY SENIOR OFFICIAL'S TIME HAS BEEN OCCUPIED WITH STATE VISITS. GIVEN THE SPECIAL EFFORT THAT BENINESE ARE MAKING TO ARRANGE FOR VISIT, BELIEVE THAT HARROP SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS FULL RANGE OF ISSUES AFFECTING BENIN/U.S. RELATIONS. I WOULD SUSPECT THAT FIRST QUESTION THAT WILL BE RAISED IS THE APPOINTMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR. IN PAST FEW WEEKS NEARLY EVERY OFFICIAL I HAVE ENCOUNTERED HAS ASKED "WHEN IS YOUR NEW AMBASSADOR COMING"? I HAVE SKIRTED ISSUE BY SAYING THIS IS A DECISION TO BE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT, BUT BELIEVE GPRB WILL WANT MORE CONCISE RESPONSE FROM HARROP. WILL HAVE OTHER NECESSARY BRIEFING MATERIAL ON HAND.

3. FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARROP: REQUEST YOUR CONCURRENCE IN THESE ARRANGEMENTS. SINCE MEETINGS AT FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL BE OVER BY ONE O'CLOCK, YOU SHOULD HAVE AMPLE TIME TO HAVE LUNCH AND STILL RETURN TO LAGOS SAME DAY IF YOU WISH. IF YOU TIRED AND WOULD PREFER TO SPEND THE NIGHT, AND RETURN TO LAGOS SATURDAY MORNING, WE WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU TO STAY WITH US. PLEASE LET ME KNOW YOUR PREFERENCES.
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4. FOR LAGOS: WILL AWAIT WORD ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARROP'S TRAVEL PLANS BEFORE MAKING FINAL TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS.
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